

118TH AVE SE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING NOTES - SEPTEMBER 17, 2009



On September 17, 2009 the City of Auburn Mayor and City staff met with neighbors of the 118th Ave SE, to discuss neighborhood concerns.

Staff in Attendance: MAYOR PETE LEWIS, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER DUANNA RICHARDS, COMMUNITY SERVICES PROJECT ASSISTANT KIRSTEN REYNOLDS, ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF LARRY MILLER AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNER CHRIS HANKINS

Community Members in Attendance: AL HURT, DIANNE BROOKS, SONIA LUDEUKSEN, PAM & DON BUSHELL, ELIZABETH HOWE, PHIL & LUANA RICHARDS, CAROLE & RON NOVAK, JOAN ROBERTS AND ESTHER PEDERSON

Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Pete Lewis welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending and asked City staff to introduce themselves. The Mayor then indicated the primary purpose of the meeting was for the City to listen to the residents' concerns, consider solutions, respond to questions they could answer immediately and identify items for follow up. The City takes notes of the meeting, which are then sent out to the attendees.

Mayor Lewis facilitated the meeting and discussed the following topics:

- ***Mayor's Update*** -- residents were encouraged to sign up for the Mayor's Update, an e-newsletter Mayor Lewis sends out every Friday about what's taken place in the City during the week, upcoming events, etc. He also uses the listserv to send out alerts about road closures, emergencies, etc. as a way to keep the community informed. Since this is a listserv, if you decide you don't want to continue receiving it you can unsubscribe at any time.
- ***How can I be prepared for emergencies?***
Mayor Lewis explained the City has several programs citizens can participate in to prepare their homes, families and neighborhoods in case of disaster. The Emergency Preparedness Division offers Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training; this is a hands-on practice in such topics as first aid, triage and survival skills. Another program discussed was Map Your Neighborhood, which is now being combined with the Block Watch training. Neighbors are taught how to get organized before a disaster happens. Generalized disaster preparedness training is also available to interested community groups and organizations. To schedule any of these classes for your neighborhood, contact their office at (253) 876-1925 or e-mail emergencyprep@auburnwa.gov; you can also visit their website to see a training schedule: <http://www.auburnwa.gov/disaster>.

Public Safety Related Questions/Comments

- ***Does Auburn have police volunteers?***
Auburn has one of the largest police volunteer groups in the State of WA. The Citizen's Academy is a free 11-week comprehensive program designed to introduce the public to the Auburn Police Department. The program includes patrol, investigations, narcotics, K-9 and a host of other police operations topics. This program will include a tour of the police dispatch center and the Citizens Academy. The Citizens Academy is open to any Auburn citizen 18 years or older. Applications are available at the Auburn Justice Center and at www.auburnwa.gov/Emergency/Police/How_to_Get_Involved.asp. Business office hours are: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., closed Sundays and

Holidays. Or you may call (253) 288-3147, leave your name and phone number, and someone from the Police Department will return your call and answer questions.

- ***Why does 9-1-1 keep you on the phone so long?***

A resident called 9-1-1 to report some vandalism happening and the operator kept asking questions for 15-20 minutes; once the call was over the vandal was gone. Mayor Lewis explained while the dispatchers are taking down information they have already dispatched the Police to the scene; they keep you on the line to get as much information as possible.

- ***If you have a problem or see anything suspicious call 9-1-1!***

Residents were encouraged to report everything to 9-1-1. The citizens of Auburn own the 9-1-1 system. You should call 9-1-1 whenever you have an emergency, feel something suspicious is going on, need to speak with an officer or file a report (online reporting is also available www.auburnwa.gov/Emergency/Police/Citizen_Online_Police_Reporting.asp if you would prefer to file your report that way). **PLEASE NOTE:** If calling from a cell phone you need to ask for an "Auburn Call Receiver."

Auburn shares ownership of the 9-1-1 system with other South King County cities and the calls go to a dispatch center so residents shouldn't worry about tying up the phone line when making non-emergency calls. When you call 9-1-1 it will be answered by a "Call Receiver." The Call Receiver will determine whether or not your call is an emergency to be handled right away or to have an officer make contact with you to file a non-emergency report. They will ask questions which are specifically designed to obtain information so that the proper response can be made for your call.

If you want to know what the officer finds out be sure to let the Call Receiver know you DO want to be contacted by the officer when they've completed their investigation.

In addition to emergency issues, residents should also call 9-1-1 for non-emergency issues such as street lights out, stop lights out, missing stop signs, fireworks, loose dogs, sewer backups, water leaks, etc. An alternative is to report them via the City website. The link is under Online Services at the top of the page and is called Online Citizen Report (half way down): www.auburnwa.gov/Business/public_works/Online_Citizen_Report.asp.

- ***Can a more secure gate be installed at the entrance of Verdana to prevent kids from entering?***

There is a problem with kids doing drugs in the Verdana development; the problem started about a year ago once the trees came down. Residents were turning in license plate numbers but stopped; Mayor Lewis suggested resuming this activity with the Auburn Police Department. The residents described the activity being most prevalent around 2 p.m. and 9-10 p.m. The kids seem pretty sophisticated, they have been changing the license plates on their cars. Staff will look at what can be done about closing this access off.

- ***Report of late night knocks on resident's doors!***

There have been a few reports of mysterious knocks on front doors occurring early in the morning. There was a burglary about 1 ½ years ago that could have been the start of these issues. Residents need to call 9-1-1 when this happens.

- ***What can be done about kids trespassing in vacant homes?***

There is a vacant house at 29926 118th Ave SE that kids are frequently going in and out of. Neighbors have called 9-1-1 to report trespassing; however, Bank of America owns it so nothing is being done to discourage it.

- ***How should residents report drug activity?***

Assistant Police Chief Larry Miller explained he will be informing Sergeant Colglazier about problems the neighborhood has shared at this meeting. There is an on-line narcotics report option available to citizens who don't want to call 9-1-1 but would like to report information to the police. Residents should always report suspicious cars or persons; however, residents need to keep in mind that Auburn has 102 commissioned Police officers, 58 of which are assigned to patrol the city's six Police sectors. There are at least six officers and a Police Sergeant on patrol at any given time covering 212 miles of roads, serving 67,000 people in two counties that are divided by two rivers. All Police calls are prioritized with threat to life or property first.

- **Online Crime Mapping -**

The City of Auburn recently launched an online crime mapping tool that allows citizens to view reported criminal activity throughout the city with near real-time data. The service is provided by CrimeReports.com and is free to the public.

Using this website, citizens can get easy-to-read incident crime maps from data that is uploaded directly from the Auburn Police Department's activity reports. Crime incident data typically includes: Incident type, date, location, distance from citizen's address, event identification/case number, and/or brief crime incident description. The reported location of registered sex offenders will also be provided on the map.

Citizens can also sign up to receive automatic daily, weekly or monthly email alerts if/when crimes occur near their home, office, local school, etc. and tools such as filters and analytics will allow citizens to search for specific crimes in their area, or to view trends via charts and graphs.

CrimeReports.com can be accessed on the City website (www.auburnwa.gov/crimereports). This enhancement, coupled with the already existing online police reporting service that was launched in 2007 allowing citizens to file non-emergency reports, is one more way that the City is using technology to increase public safety and awareness.

For more information on these services, contact the City of Auburn Police Department at (253) 931-3080.

- ***What is Block Watch?***

Block Watch is built on the concept of neighbors watching out for each other because you know better than anyone else who belongs in your neighborhood and who doesn't. If you think "maybe I should call 9-1-1 about this," you should. Residents were encouraged to set up a Block Watch. Once the group is formed, Community Programs Officer Andy Gould will come out to do the formal training on what to watch for, how to react and how to get neighborhood participation. Groups are encouraged to get together several times a year to maintain an active group.

Streets/Sewer/Traffic Related Questions/Comments

- ***How can we make sure that 118th Ave SE does not become a through street?***

Residents were adamant they do not want to see 118th Ave SE become a through road. Staff will relay this information to the Public Works Committee and include the neighborhood on any future street developments.

- **Can more fencing be added to the end of 118th Ave SE to stop pedestrian traffic?**
Staff will check into allowing for this. **UPDATE: Due to use by students who need access to local schools and parks, the City does not recommend closing pedestrian access at this location.**
- **What needs to happen to get Verdana connected to a gravity sewer line?**
The Verdana developer was invited to the neighborhood meeting and asked about getting the development connected to a gravity line for sewer. Public Works staff will look into what would need to happen to make this happen. **UPDATE: Sewer lines for Verdana drain to a sewer pump station located on the west edge of the development, just east of 118th Ave SE. Upon completion of the station, the City will complete a project to install additional gravity lines from two other pump stations to the new one, allowing those other two stations to be decommissioned. The City originally anticipated that the station would be completed in 2008; however, the slowing of the housing market, and some potential legal issues related to the pump station have delayed its completion and transfer to the City. The timing for the start of operations for the pump station is unknown at this time.**
- **Is the water easement originally required by the City of Kent for Verdana to be developed still necessary?**
Residents have been compensated for this land, but because there was never a pipeline installed the residents would like to know how or if they can get the land back. Staff will research if the easement is still necessary. **UPDATE: this land was never deeded to the City of Auburn; once a determination is reached residents will be informed.**
- **What can be done about flooding streets?**
Residents have had storm water issues (impacted residents living at 29317 118th Ave SE) in the rainy season preventing them from accessing their property for days. Staff suspects the culverts are inadequate; City staff will evaluate the situation and look for ways to prevent this from happening in the future.
- **Can more street lights be located on 118th Ave SE?**
There are only a couple lights on the entire road. Mayor Lewis asked the neighborhood to get together and decide where they want more lighting. Once the request is received the City will talk to PSE regarding the possibility for more lights on 118th Ave SE.
- **Can 118th Ave SE get street reflectors and a center line painted?**
It would really help to have street reflectors and a center line painted to prevent accidents all the way down and/or just on the hill because it is a blind spot. **UPDATE: This Street has been added to the working list for striping and new reflectorized pavement markers. King County crews have been notified to complete this work but installation is weather dependant.**

Development/Planning/Code Enforcement Related Questions/Comments

- **Is Verdana ever going to be a part of Auburn?**
Currently Verdana is part of metropolitan Kent; once the development is completed Kent has agreed to allow the people living in that neighborhood to become annexed into the City of Auburn if they wish. The decision is solely up to the residents living within that designated area and will be done by a vote.

- ***What can be done about vacant houses in the neighborhood?***

Auburn Code Enforcement Officers will come out once a specific house is reported; the officers can look at the home's aesthetics and structure according to City Code. Washington is a very liberal state; if there are health issues on site it may be possible that something could be done to enforce some action.

Summary of Solutions Discussed/Action Items

- 1) Residents ask for street reflectors and a center line to be painted on the 118th hill to help prevent accidents from this blind spot.
- 2) Can more street lights be located on 118th; there are only a couple lights on the entire road. Mayor asked the neighbors to get together and come up with a plan where they want more lighting. The City will talk with PSE to see if more lights can structurally be placed on the street.
- 3) Is the water easement still necessary which was originally required by the City of Kent for Verdonia to be developed. Residents were originally compensated for this land but there was never a pipeline installed, residents would like to ask for the land back if possible. Staff will research if the easement is still necessary. ***UPDATE: this land was never deeded to the City of Auburn; once a determination is reached residents will be informed.***
- 4) There is a vacant house at 29926 118th Ave SE that kids are frequently going in and out of. Neighbors have called 9-1-1 to report trespassing; however Bank of America owns it. Staff will need to review the code to see if anything can be done regarding this situation.
- 5) There have been storm water issues that impacted residents (living at 29317 118th Ave SE) by not being able to access property for days. Staff suspects the culverts are inadequate; our storm staff will look into how to prevent this from happening in the future.
- 6) Can a more secure locking gate be installed at the entrance of Verdonia (Yarrow Bay)? We can do something to make it more secure.
- 7) Residents were adamant they did not want 118th Ave SE to become a through road; staff will talk to the PW Committee about this wish.
- 8) Can more fencing be added to the end of 118th Ave SE to stop pedestrian traffic?
- 9) The Verdonia development asked about connecting to the gravity line for sewer and what it would take to get connected to it. Public Works staff will look into what would need to happen to make this happen.

Community Services Team Contact Information:

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